

Vermont's congressional delegation – U.S. Sens. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) – announced today the release of \$3.6 million for Vermont under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

"As Vermont's winter settles in, another installment of home heating aid helps. This allocation will keep many seniors and families with small children from going cold this winter," the delegation said in a joint statement. "But at a time when heating oil costs are rising and we're in the midst of a major recession, we must do more. We must at least restore funding at last year's level for this critically important program."

Sanders, Leahy and Welch are cosponsors of legislation to provide level funding for LIHEAP at \$4.7 billion. Sanders and Leahy have called on Senate leadership to bring up the measure as soon as Congress reconvenes in January.

The latest release of federal funds still would leave Vermont with a 25 percent cut from last winter. Altogether Vermont is expected to receive \$19.6 million this winter, down from \$26 million last year.

Nationwide, the year-end spending package Congress approved last Saturday included only \$3.5 billion for the home Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, a cut of \$1.2 billion from last year.